

SAN FRANCISCO BAY SHRIMP JUNK PROJECT



From March through September 2003, the Small Craft Department of San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, in conjunction with China Camp State Park, built a full-scale reconstruction of a San Francisco Bay Area fishing boat: a Chinese Shrimp Junk.

Photo left: The Shrimp Junk taking shape at China Camp State Park. Photo: Gary Parsons.



Working from historic photographs, oral histories, and archaeological information, the largely volunteer crew, led by San Francisco Maritime NHP curator and boatbuilder John Muir, constructed the 42- foot junk. It was built outdoors at the site of one of the largest of the Chinese Shrimp fishing villages: China Camp State Park, in San Rafael, California.

Photo left: These single-mast vessels, ranging from 30 to 50 feet in length, were built almost entirely of local redwood. The long and narrow junks plied the waters of the shallower regions of the Bay Area from circa 1860 to 1910. The fishermen worked large triangular nets staked to mudflats, and brought their catch of shrimp ashore to small fishing villages. The shrimp were boiled, dried and processed for shipment to Hawaii and Asia.

The SF Bay Shrimp Junk Project boatbuilding team constructed the junk using, as much as possible, original materials and traditional Chinese boatbuilding techniques. The team hand-forged its own nails and mixed its own caulking putty. They also used the traditional Chinese method of bending wood through the direct application of fire.



Testing the *Grace Quan*'s rig at Hyde Street Pier. Photo: Chris Jannini



Broadside view of the *Grace Quan*'s rig at Hyde Street Pier. Photo: Chris Jannini

The junk was launched October 2003 and named the *Grace Quan*. On Saturday, April 10, 2004 the crew raised a handmade sail on the boat's polished mast, and sailed the 40-foot vessel on her maiden voyage along San Francisco's waterfront.

The event was celebrated with lion dancers and firecrackers. Speakers included then Park Superintendent Kate Richardson, California State Park Ranger Pat Robards, historian Phil Choy, and author Amy Tan (*The Joy Luck Club*).